UNIT 1 ENGLISH

BOOK 1

Introduction

Course Overview
Area of Study 1: Reading and Creating Texts
List 1 Texts for 2017
Annotations

The Creative Response

The Written Explanation

Context

Themes and Issues

Setting
Plot
Structure
Characters
Style

Language and Expression

Tone

Point of View

Form and Genre

Language

Glossary of Terms

Key Film Techniques

Constructing a Study Sheet

Analytical Response to a Text

Fundamentals of the Text Response

Using Quotations

Introductions

Revise and Edit

Common Text Response Problems

Creative Response to a Text

Planning Your Creative Response
UNIT 1 ENGLISH

AREA OF STUDY 1

INTRODUCTION

ACTIVITY 1
Identify three of your strengths in English, three areas you need to improve in English and three strategies you will implement this year to help you achieve your goals in this subject.

Strengths:
1.
2.
3.

Areas for improvement:
1.
2.
3.

Action Plan:
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
### COURSE OVERVIEW

**UNIT 1 SUMMARY FOR VCE ENGLISH STUDENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome 1</th>
<th>Suitable assessment tasks for English students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Produce analytical and creative responses to texts.</td>
<td>An analytical response to a text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A creative response to a text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Assessment tasks for Outcome 1 must include at least one analytical and one creative response to set texts.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome 2</th>
<th>Suitable assessment tasks for English students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyse how argument and persuasive language can be used to position audiences, and create their own texts intended to position audiences.</td>
<td>An analysis of the use of argument and persuasive language in text/s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A text intended to position an audience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*One assessment task, but no more than one task, in Unit 1 must be in oral or multimodal form.*

**NB: Assessment**

Procedures for the assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision. Assessment of levels of achievement for these units will not be reported to the VCAA. Schools may choose to report levels of achievement using grades, descriptive statements or other indicators.
AREA OF STUDY 1
READING AND CREATING TEXTS

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to produce analytical and creative responses to texts.

Key knowledge

- An understanding of the text including characters, settings and events, and ideas, issues and themes.

- The ways authors – create meaning, including ideas, issues and themes, and build the world of the text, including characters, settings and events – respond to particular contexts, audiences and purposes.

- The ways in which meaning is affected by the contexts in which a text is created and read.

- The features of a range of literary and other written, spoken and multimodal texts, including structures, conventions, language, and how they convey an author’s voice and style.

- The conventions of oral presentations including intonation, stress, rhythm, pitch, timing, volume, gesture and eye contact.

- The conventions of discussion such as active listening, checking for understanding and turn-taking.

- The features of analytical responses to a range of literary and other texts: structure, conventions, and language including relevant metalanguage.

- The features of creative responses (written, spoken and multimodal) including structure, conventions and language, and how they create voice and style.

- The conventions of spelling, punctuation and syntax of Standard Australian English.
**Key skills**

- Identify, explain and analyse – characters, settings, events, and ideas, issues and themes presented in texts – how texts are created in and for different contexts, audiences and purposes, and the choices made by authors to meet these – how features of texts are used to create meaning – the impact of texts on audiences by considering the similarities and differences between texts.

- Apply the conventions of oral presentation in the delivery of spoken texts.

- Apply the conventions of discussion.

- Use textual evidence appropriately to support analytical responses.

- Plan analytical responses to texts.

- Plan creative responses to texts (written, spoken and multimodal), for example consider an alternative perspective or explore a gap or moment in the text, taking account of the purpose, context and audience in determining the selected content and approach.

- Explain and justify decisions made in the writing process.

- Develop, test and clarify ideas using discussion and writing.

- Draft, review, edit and refine creative and analytical responses to texts, making choices about features of texts and using feedback gained from individual reflection, discussion, and peer and teacher comments.

- Apply the conventions of spelling, punctuation and syntax of Standard Australian English accurately and appropriately.
LIST 1 TEXTS FOR 2017

NOVELS

Adiga, Aravind, *The White Tiger* (3)
Grenville, Kate, *The Lieutenant* (1) (A)
Kent, Hannah, *Burial Rites* (3) (A)
Le Guin, Ursula, *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1)
London, Joan, *The Golden Age* (1) (A)
Shelley, Mary, *Frankenstein* (2)
Winton, Tim, *Cloudstreet* (4) (A)
Witting, Amy, *I for Isobel* (3) (A)

SHORT STORIES

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi, *The Thing Around Your Neck* (4)
Stories for study:

MacLeod, Alistair, *Island: Collected Stories* (2)
Stories for study:

PLAYS

Davis, Jack, *No Sugar* (4) (A)
Euripides, ‘Medea’, in *Medea and Other Plays* (3)
Shakespeare, William, *Measure for Measure* (2)

POETRY/SONGS

Donne, John, *Selected Poems* (2)
Skrzynecki, Peter, *Old/New World: New & Selected Poems* (1) (A)
MULTIMODAL TEXTS

Films
Mankiewicz, Joseph L (director), *All About Eve* (4)
Perkins, Rachel (director), *Mabo* (4) (A)

Other
Spiegelman, Art, *The Complete Maus* (4)

Non-fiction texts
Boo, Katherine, *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity* (1)
Wolff, Tobias, *This Boy’s Life* (4)

ANNOTATIONS

NOVELS


Set in modern-day India, *The White Tiger* follows Balram Halwai from his early life of rural poverty to his eventual success as an entrepreneur and wealthy urbanite. Narrated as a series of letters to the former Chinese premier, Wen Jiabao, the novel charts Balram’s journey out of the slums populated by the poor and lower castes, and celebrates his eventual triumph as he breaks free from a life of servitude and obeisance. The novel explores the divisions between the rich and the poor, and considers how social structures operate to reinforce class hierarchy. Adiga’s darkly comic novel also raises questions about the reliability and integrity of the narrator, and asks whether success is ever possible without moral compromise.


Grenville’s work of historical fiction depicts the journey of a young Marine Lieutenant Daniel Rooke and how he navigates his troubled childhood in 18th-century Portsmouth, his life in Australia and, finally, in Antigua. A gifted mathematician and astronomer, Rooke is sent to Australia’s first settlement, where he becomes obsessed with learning and recording in writing the language of the Cardigal people. Rooke’s attachment to his ‘tutors’, particularly Tagaran, tests his loyalties, making him choose between old and new-found friends, and patriotic obligations and conscience, leaving him emotionally alienated and, ultimately, physically isolated. Grenville’s novel examines the themes of knowledge, ambition, friendship, difference and isolation, and the role of language.
Kent, Hannah, *Burial Rites*, Picador, 2013 (3) (A)

*Burial Rites* is a re-imagining of the events leading up to the last public execution in Iceland, the beheading of Agnes Magnúsdóttir. The narrative opens in 1829, when the condemned woman is transferred to the isolated home of Jón Jónsson’s family to undergo spiritual counselling with the young assistant reverend, Tóti, and await her execution. Kent captures the domineering, unforgiving nature of the landscape of northern Iceland and its influence over the characters’ lives. As the story of Agnes’s early life and the circumstances surrounding her crime become apparent, preconceived notions of innocence and guilt are challenged, and powerful relationships are formed. The text’s richness is achieved through the use of flashbacks, multiple narrators and excerpts from archival material. The various perspectives humanise the protagonist and highlight the unreliable nature of stories. With accessible language and a compelling plot, this text has the capacity to transport the reader to another time and place.

Le Guin, Ursula, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, Orbit, 1992 (1)

In *The Left Hand of Darkness*, Le Guin uses the science fiction genre to explore what a society without men or women, where all humans share the features of both genders, could be like. Set on the planet Gethen, the story begins with Genly Ai, an envoy from an intergalactic coalition, negotiating with the leaders of Karhide, a country on Gethen. Ai becomes a pawn in national and global politics, and a thrilling tale of political intrigue unfolds. A complex narrative told through multiple voices and archival documents, *The Left Hand of Darkness* confronts many assumptions about what it is to be human for both Ai and the inhabitants of Gethen.


*The Golden Age* tells the story of Frank Gold, a 13-year-old refugee recovering at The Golden Age Children’s Polio Convalescent Home. Frank, or Ferenc, is learning to walk again but is also dealing with his memories of his time in war-torn Hungary. He forms a close relationship with Elsa, a fellow patient, who inspires his poetry. Set in 1950s Perth, the novel explores grand themes such as the refugee experience, love, memory, fear and isolation through the microcosm of The Golden Age. This is a surprisingly uplifting telling of a sad and moving story.

Shelley, Mary, *Frankenstein*, Penguin Classics, 2003 (2)

On a bleak November night, the scientist Victor Frankenstein assembles in his laboratory the instruments he needs to animate the lifeless body at his feet. When his experiment works, he unleashes ‘the monster’ that begins to haunt him. Frankenstein is terrified of his creation and its acts, but ‘the monster’ may turn out to be more human than its creator. Mary Shelley’s Gothic novel explores the contradictions in a flawed humanity and is as startling today as it was upon its publication in 1818.

Winton, Tim, *Cloudstreet*, Penguin, 2007 (4) (A)

Through hapless circumstance, the Lambs and Pickles families find themselves living together in a ramshackle house in Perth that comes to be called ‘Cloudstreet’. Winton explores whether we make our own luck or whether chance rules our lives, the complexity, humour and tragedy in family relationships, and a brand of Australian identity and childhood forged in post-World War II Australia. In the background there is the Lambs’s son, Fish, whose mysterious connection with water, a result of a near-drowning incident that left him disabled as a child, hints at our subconscious and often ignored spiritual connection to the world around us.

Amy Witting’s *I for Isobel* is a rite-of-passage novel, a ‘portrait of the artist as a young woman’. Isobel’s quest for independence and an identity separate from her overbearing mother is marked by her intelligence, her anxiety and her sense of the absurd. The story is structured in a series of five self-contained episodes, each with Isobel’s insights or epiphanies as she moves from her working-class Sydney home to a Catholic school, then a boarding house, and encounters university students and the world of work. Her ‘getting of wisdom’, taking her from the entrapment of family into transcendent awareness of her identity as a writer in the ‘word factory’, is told with compassion, mordant humour and powerful, dramatic realism.

**SHORT STORIES**

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi, *The Thing Around Your Neck*, Harper Collins (Fourth Estate), 2009 (4)


This collection of stories explores the parallel lives of characters in contemporary Nigeria and the Nigerian émigré community in the United States. Adichie’s work comments on cultural misunderstandings not just between countries but within them. The stories are often confronting, as her characters search for an escape from the violence of their environment and often from their tragic lives. Many of the stories address the universal theme of how people cope in the face of injustice within the fraught context of many African societies. In contrast, the American-based stories highlight the problems associated with isolation and the desire to connect with others.

MacLeod, Alistair, *Island: Collected Stories*, Vintage, 2002 (2)


MacLeod’s collection of short stories includes tales of individuals, families and small communities in his characteristic spare, evocative prose. MacLeod’s preoccupations are family relationships and memory; grandparents, parents, husbands, wives and their children come to terms with the past as they face an uncertain future. The reader sees a community in a period of modernisation and change, and is invited to question what is gained and what is lost. Most of the stories are set in Canada’s remote eastern provinces; the wild beauty of the land and sea provides a stark background to the human drama within each of the stories.
PLAYS

Davis, Jack, No Sugar, Currency Press, 2012 (4) (A)

Spanning five years during the Depression, Jack Davis’s social drama explores Australia’s apartheid past in Western Australia. The Millimurra family battles the racism, brutality and indifference of the white bureaucracy, constabulary and their black tracker brothers. Davis’s Indigenous perspective and use of language reveal the political inequality, wanton violence, moral corruption and sexual exploitation inflicted on local Indigenous people by the ‘wetjalas’. Forcibly relocated, often incarcerated, and deprived of basic freedoms and justice, the Millimurras draw their strength from family and their land. This play challenges the audience to reflect on the damage wrought by white ‘civilisation’.


Euripides explores the psyche of the wronged woman in this famous ancient Greek tragedy. The eponymous Medea discovers that her husband, Jason, has married the daughter of King Creon, abandoning his barbarian wife and two sons. Jason promises to reunite them under one household, with Medea as his mistress, but Medea is not placated. The other characters fear what Medea might do and try to thwart her but, ultimately, Medea’s grief is so strong that revenge is inevitable. Medea’s sense of powerlessness against unfolding events, which are controlled by men, leads her to seek vengeance in a most hideous way, betraying even her love for her own children. As the play builds to its horrifying climax, the behaviour of the characters causes the audience to re-evaluate its sympathies and to question whether retribution can ever be justified.

Shakespeare, William, Measure for Measure, Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (eds), Macmillan, 2010 (2)

Measure for Measure explores diverse themes of power, love, immorality and morality, corruption, punishment and forgiveness. The play is set in Vienna, where the ruler, Duke Vincentio, has temporarily abdicated his power and authority to his deputy, Angelo. Angelo’s duty is to reinforce the old Christian laws that have lapsed in order to rid the city of moral decay. Measure for Measure blends elements of darkness with comedy and is often called a tragicomedy. Shakespeare sets up conflicts between the thematic elements of strict moralistic expectations and narrow interpretations of justice, clashing with individuals and their choices and freedom. The audience is prompted to consider the nature of justice and the fallibility of individuals in power.
POETRY/SONGS


Donne’s poetry is distinguished by its sharp wit, profundity of thought, elocution and nuance. He is considered by many to be one of the greatest writers of ‘metaphysical’ poetry, in which passion is interwoven with reasoning. Donne’s works include, but are not limited to, sonnets, love poems satires, sermons and songs. Known for its emotional intensity and terse syntax, Donne’s poetry draws on imagery from fields such as alchemy, astronomy and politics.

Skrzynecki, Peter, *Old/New World: New & Selected Poems*, University of Queensland Press, 2007 (1) (A)

Peter Skrzynecki is the German-born son of Polish parents who immigrated to Australia in 1949. He writes of their efforts to adapt to the new country while maintaining the traditions of their homeland. Written largely in free verse, his poems deal with family relationships, in his case both as a son and as a parent, and the importance of memory and friendship. Skrzynecki’s poems are lyrical and appreciative as he describes both the Australian landscape and the experience of life in suburbia. Skrzynecki’s relationships with fellow Australian writers and artists are also reflected in his poetry.

MULTIMODAL TEXTS

FILMS

*All About Eve*, Director: Joseph L Mankiewicz, 1950 (4)

Winner of the Oscar for best picture in 1950, *All About Eve* is one of the classics of 20th-century film. Notable for its strong female roles, played by Bette Davis, Anne Baxter, Celeste Holm and Thelma Ritter, all of whom were nominated for Oscars, the film focuses on the ageing star Margo Channing, a Broadway actress renowned for being difficult. When ardent fan Eve Harrington expresses her admiration for her idol, Margo is at first flattered, but as Eve starts to work her way further into Margo’s life, she starts to suspect that Eve is not quite what she seems. The extremely witty screenplay highlights issues of gender, ageing, fame and trust. (Rating: PG)

*Mabo*, Director: Rachel Perkins, 2012 (4) (A)

*Mabo* charts the journey that led to the High Court of Australia overturning the legal doctrine of terra nullius. It explores the professional and personal challenges of one of Australia’s most well-known Indigenous activists, Eddie ‘Koiki’ Mabo. The film delves into Eddie’s public life, the sacrifices made in order to change discrimination and injustice enshrined in law, and the impact on his personal life and relationship with his wife, Bonita. It is a story about love and history. Director Rachel Perkins aims to ‘present Indigenous iconic stories to Australians’ and interweave them with the ‘Australian narrative’. (Rating: PG)


Using the graphic novel form, Art Spiegelman constructs a dual narrative that explores both the disturbing experiences of his parents during the Holocaust and his own contemporary relationship with his father, Vladek. A difficult man in his old age, Vladek shows remarkable fortitude and resilience by surviving Auschwitz, but the price he and his wife, Anja, pay is a great one. This graphic novel highlights themes of survival, guilt, suffering and family conflict, and depicts Spiegelman’s struggle to tell his father’s story.
NON-FICTION TEXTS

Boo, Katherine, *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity*, Scribe, 2013 (1)

Set in a Mumbai slum, this narrative non-fiction book documents how those living in poverty – particularly women and children – negotiate the age of globalisation. After several years of fieldwork, Boo explores the profound inequality in the lives of the slum-dwellers and the degree to which society’s most exposed people can control aspects of their existence. Posing uncomfortable questions about the messy nature of justice and opportunity, *Behind the Beautiful Forevers* reveals the conditions that sabotage humanity’s ‘innate capacity for moral action’. Boo’s confronting work observes what happens when versions of reality clash and examines the role of perception, power and self-preservation in pulling vulnerable people back from the brink upon which they totter.

Wolff, Tobias, *This Boy’s Life*, Bloomsbury, 1989 (4)

Ten-year-old Tobias Wolff is constantly on the road as his mother desperately seeks to build a better life for them both. Wolff finds life on the move very challenging as he struggles with the ever-changing routine and the changing faces of the many people he meets. When they finally settle in Utah, he decides to change his name to Jack, after his hero, Jack London, to mark the beginning of his new life. This memoir traces Jack’s experiences growing up against the background of a violent and gritty 1950s America.
THE CREATIVE RESPONSE

In Units 1 and 3, students are required to respond to the set text in a creative form. Although the response is to be creative in nature, the set text remains central to this task.

Students may transform and adapt key moments or aspects of the text as a way to develop and extend their understanding of the original.

The connections made between the original text and the creative response need to be credible and authentic.

Some ideas for the development of a creative response include:

- Present the original text from an alternative perspective
- Transpose the original text into another form
- Explore a gap or silence in the original text
- Explore an idea, issue or theme from the original text in detail
- Transpose the original text into a new setting
- Adapt the language of the original text to create a new or different impact

Some ideas for the form of the creative response include:

- A monologue
- A script
- A graphic text
- A short film
- A prologue
- An epilogue
- A chapter
- A series of letters
- A series of journal entries
THE WRITTEN EXPLANATION

As part of the Unit 3 creative response assessment task, students are required to demonstrate the connection between their creative response and the original text by justifying their choices in a written explanation. The written explanation is a detailed paragraph that outlines the decisions made by the student as they developed their creative response. The purpose, context and audience must all be addressed in the explanation in order to justify the selected content and approach to the task.

EXAMPLE

Sample written explanation

Sample text: Burial Rites by Hannah Kent

For my creative response, I decided to write an internal monologue for the character of Steina in the novel Burial Rites. This seemed appropriate given that the text presents the story from a range of points of view, including that of the protagonist, Agnes. I thought it would be interesting to view the narrative from the perspective of the eldest daughter of Jon and Margret, because there seems to be so much that she would like to say to the murderer who is lodging in her house, yet she is forbidden to do so. Steina recognises Agnes from a childhood incident, and as a result, sees the humanity in her. This is in direct contrast to her mother and sister who initially regard Agnes with disdain and treat her as an animal. I chose a first-person narrative to allow Steina to express her views about Agnes instead of having to share the views of her mother. I used simple and spare language to reflect the fact that Steina cannot probably read or write very well because she is a girl and the daughter of a peasant farmer. This would have been very typical of the context in which the novel is set.

(Source: vcaa.vic.edu.au)

ORAL FORM

In both Units 1 and 3, students have the option of presenting their creative response in oral form. This provides an opportunity for students to present their response to an audience and to practise for their oral presentation in Unit 4. The performance descriptor for this assessment task contains reference to both the written and oral form of the response.
To write a **credible and authentic** creative response **you need to complete a close study of the text**. Part of your study will involve discussing writing approaches to the creative task therefore you will need to understand the detail of the text.

**TEXT ELEMENTS**

You need an organised approach to writing a text response.

You need to:

1. Know the five key areas of text and how context influences text construction and development.
2. Construct a study sheet.
3. Understand the conventions, terms and features associated with different forms of texts and their genres.

No matter what type of text you are asked to write you need to able to discuss your texts in terms of their issues and experiences as well as the five key areas.

**FIVE KEY AREAS + CONTEXT**

There are five key areas you need to consider when studying most literary texts. Understanding these areas; themes and issues, setting, plot, character, style and how they influence one another in the construction of the text helps develop your knowledge and appreciation of the text.

You need to be able to write about your text using these terms. The context acts like an umbrella over the key areas. Setting, plot, character and style all help to develop and explore theme. Not all these areas are always covered in every literary text e.g. a poem, unless it is a ballad might not necessarily contain plot.
CONTEXT

Context refers to the surrounding circumstances and influences on the author and text. These circumstances include:

- Political
- Social
- Educational
- Religious
- Family
- Cultural
- Influential people
- Other experiences
- Economic factors

Knowing the context of a set text and the author before you read it provides you with an insight into the background of the texts and the factors that influenced the construction of the text. You also need to consider the actual context within the text.

For example: Geographical location of story/ cultural, political and social setting and how it affects the issues and development of the text.

‘The Wife of Martin Guerre’ by Janet Lewis, reveals the role of women in a patriarchal society in the sixteenth century village of Artigues that is isolated due to its climate and geography.
THEMES AND ISSUES

The themes, issues and messages of a text are central to the purpose of the text. The writer, film-maker, playwright or poet selects and arranges material in the text to support and develop their themes. They can refer to the subject of the work.

These themes may be stated directly by a character or in the author’s introduction or title. The film, Gattaca, explores issues of genetic perfection and conformity in a sterile futuristic setting.

Because readers have a variety of experiences and therefore interpret texts differently two people can read the same text and elicit different themes. Knowing the context of the text and the issues the author is interested in can provide the reader with central themes beforehand. You need to read the text closely in order to identify and track the development of themes. See next page for list of themes/issues.

THEMES/ISSUES IN TEXTS

Betrayal of friends and/or family
Change vs continuity
Commitment
Conformity and individuality – one character standing alone
Cultural conflict
God-made vs man-made
Role of women in society
Effect of death on characters
Dependence vs independence
Family relationships – destruction of or building of
Fantasy vs reality
Gender
Honour among friends
Discovering identity of self
Jealousy vs trust
Man’s justice vs God’s justice
Loneliness
Power and politics
Racial prejudice
Religion effects family
Sexual harassment in the workplace